

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in this application. Claims 1-12 are allowed. Claims 13-17 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claim 9 has been amended as requested by the Examiner. For the reasons explained below, the application, as amended, is believed to be in condition for allowance.

The drawings were objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) for failing to show every feature of the claimed invention. In particular, the Examiner notes that there is no drawing showing the tapered surface of claims 4 and 6-12. This feature is described in the specification at page 3, line 33 through page 4, line 3, for instance. New FIG. 5A has been provided to illustrate this embodiment of the invention in the drawings. The specification has also been amended to identify and refer to this figure. No new matter has been added.

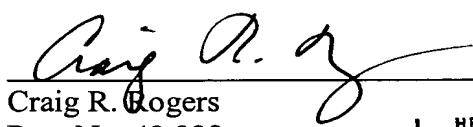
Claim 9 has been amended. Specifically, the word "tying" has been removed from claim 9, line 2, as requested by the Examiner, to be consistent with claim 6 from which it depends.

Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Dobbins, et al. Claims 13, 15 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Thomas. Claims 14 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thomas. Claims 13-17 have been cancelled without prejudice.

Claims 1-12 are allowed. The rejected claims 13-17 have been cancelled without prejudice and only the allowed claims remain pending. The application, as amended, is believed to be in condition for allowance. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that any other issues need to be addressed.

Respectfully submitted,

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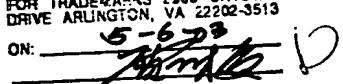

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IN THE SPECIFICATION

The following new paragraph has been inserted on page 2, line 29:

FIG. 5A is a cutaway front view of the brace of FIG. 5, showing a tapered internal surface according to another embodiment of the invention.

The paragraph beginning on page 3, line 33 has been rewritten as follows:

The closed loop presents an internal surface, whose shape may be cylindrical at least in part. In another embodiment of the invention, such as shown in FIG. 5A, the internal surface 56A is tapered, to provide better contact with the instrument. By tapered, it is meant that its diameter changes gradually and monotonically in planes taken perpendicularly along a long axis of the supported instrument.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 13-17 without prejudice. Please rewrite the remaining claims as follows:

1. (Previously Amended) A combination comprising:
a woodwind musical instrument comprising a shaft; and
a device for supporting the woodwind musical instrument on a neck of a user,
wherein the device comprises:

a strap for looping around the neck; and
a brace forming a closed loop that presents at least three inside contact
points, the three inside contact points delineating a support circle for
contacting the shaft and supporting the woodwind musical instrument, the
brace further comprising at least two distinct connection sections, wherein
ends of the strap are connected to the connection sections without any portions
of the strap intruding into the support circle.

2. (Previously Amended) The device of claim 1, wherein the connection sections
are formed opposite each other on the brace.

3. (Previously Amended) The device of claim 2, wherein ends of the strap are
tied around the connection sections.

4. (Previously Amended) The device of claim 1, in which the closed loop
presents an internal surface that is tapered to match an upwardly expanding diameter of the
woodwind musical instrument.

5 (Previously Amended) The device of claim 4, wherein the tapered internal
surface supports the woodwind musical instrument.

6. (Previously Amended) A device for supporting a woodwind musical
instrument on a user, comprising:
a strap for looping around a neck of the user; and
a brace forming a closed loop for receiving the instrument therein, the brace
further forming two openings distinct from each other, in which ends of the strap are

passed through the openings and prevented from exiting therefrom, without any portion of the strap intruding in the closed loop,

wherein the closed loop comprises an internal surface that is tapered to match an upwardly expanding diameter of a shaft of the woodwind musical instrument.

7. (Previously Amended) The device of claim 6, wherein the tapered internal surface supports the woodwind musical instrument.

8. (Previously Amended) The device of claim 6, in which the brace is shaped such that the internal surface of the closed loop is cylindrical and provides multiple contact points for contacting the shaft and supporting the woodwind musical instrument.

9. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 6, in which the brace further includes a skirt transverse to a plane of the ~~tying~~ openings.

10. (Previously Amended) The device of claim 9, further comprising ribs extending between the skirt and the closed loop.

11. (Previously Amended) The device of claim 6, in which the woodwind musical instrument is a recorder.

12. (Previously Amended) The device of claim 11, in which the recorder is a two-piece recorder being separable at a separation point along the shaft thereof, and wherein the shaft of the two-piece recorder gradually increases in diameter from the separation point to a mouth piece end.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)